

Respiratory protection

Reason	Inhalation of harmful dusts and fumes causes health and respiratory problems that can lead to long-term suffering.
Outline	This talk covers matters that require consideration when protecting against respiratory risks.



Reusable half-mask respirator



Circular saw with vacuum collection



Ventilated visor and ventilated helmet respirator



Disposable filtering half-mask respirator



**A mask may protect the user, but safe systems protect everyone.
You should be face-fit tested for the type of RPE you are going to use.**

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Some facts

1. Each year, around 3,000 construction workers suffer with breathing and lung problems they believe were caused, or made worse, by their work.
2. It is estimated that around 4,000 construction workers die each year as a result of breathing in dusts and fumes at work.
3. More than 2 million working days a year are lost to work-related ill health in the construction industry.
4. At any one time there are far more people off work through occupational ill health than through work-related accidents.

Provision and use

1. Where dust and fumes cannot be avoided by engineering or mechanical means (such as extraction, collection or dampening down) then the correct respiratory protective equipment (RPE) must be provided and used.
2. RPE must be designed to reduce the level of exposure specific to the type and quantity of dust or fumes.
3. Different types of RPE are available, ranging from disposable, filtering half-masks and half-mask respirators with cartridges, to ventilated visors or helmet respirators.
4. Selection of RPE is important and must take into account people who wear glasses, have stubble or a beard, or have long hair that is not swept back and secured.
5. Personal face-fit is a critical element in the selection and use of RPE.

Your duties

1. Use RPE properly, whenever it is required.
2. Report any defects in, or damage to, the RPE immediately.
3. Participate in any training or instruction provided on RPE.
4. Inform your employer of any medical conditions that you have, which might be affected by the use of RPE.



What should you think about, for yourself and others, in your work area if you are asked to carry out a task that involves creating dust?

What is a face-fit test?

What should you do if your face mask does not fit comfortably?

What should you do if you have prescription safety glasses and you have recently started wearing glasses?



Now inform your workers of the company provision and policy for RPE assessment, face-fit testing and issue of RPE.